

Southern Flyer

908th Airlift Wing (Air Force Reserve Command), Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Ala., Vol. 42, Issue 10, October 2005



908th to the rescue

Wing volunteers pitch
in to help in wake of
Hurricane Katrina

By Jeff Melvin
908th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Nearly two weeks into the rescue, relief and recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, a small number of 908th Airlift Wing members continue supporting humanitarian operations.

Tasked by U.S. Northern Command (see story and photos on Page 5) to fly airlift missions around the disaster area, the wing provided aircraft, aircrews and aeromedical personnel. About 60 wing personnel, including security forces and aerial port squadron personnel along with the aircrew and aeromedical people, were tabbed to respond to the initial requirements. That number has decreased to about 20 as federal, state, local and military officials reexamine taskings. Military forces were dispatched in anticipation of what capabilities would be needed; others were in response to requests for specific capabilities. Some of those forces have now completed their mission or their capabilities have been replaced by other local or state agencies, permitting the return of personnel to their home stations. As relief operations continue, the Defense Dept. will continue to adjust its forces to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency-led effort.

After flying steadily during the first week, the 908th



Photo by Maj. Jerry Lobb

Aeromedical services technician Staff Sgt. Cassandra Satterwhite, 908th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, provides comfort to a Gulf

aircrews are back at home.

C-130 pilot Lt. Col. Jan Sztuka was one of eight unit members who took part in a hectic week of flying, Sept. 4-11. Six aircrew members and two crew chiefs flew eight missions, spanning three different days, including one over Labor Day weekend.

"No one cared that it was a three-day weekend, we just wanted to help. (Of course) The people who needed the help didn't know it was a three-day weekend either," Colonel Sztuka said.

"Absolutely shocking" is how he described the extent of the disaster. "I've never seen anything quite like it. From Biloxi (Miss.) to New Orleans, 1/2-mile of coastline is gone."

He added that at one

point during a mission, members of the crew, many of whom had combat experience, sat transfixed and fell silent, viewing the devastation.

"Speaking for the whole crew, our only regret is that we couldn't do more. This (the relief missions) is one of the things that really feels good about being in the Air Force. It'll probably be one of the things we remember most," the aircraft commander said.

Similarly, 10 of the 16 aeromedical evacuation personnel have been released. The six remaining 908th AES people in a joint effort with six AE personnel from March AFB, Calif.'s 452nd Air Mobility Wing are staffing a crew management

Coast evacuee aboard a C-130 Hercules from the 357th Airlift Squadron.

cell, facilitating the movement of affected patients through the medical system.

At one point, reservists accounted for 98 percent of all aeromedical evacuations. As of Sept. 7, that number waned to 80 percent. The need for further medical evacuations dramatically dropped after Sept. 4 because local medical people were able to handle most of the patients.

The crew management cells, reduced from three to two, are responsible for more than 360 personnel, comprising 55 aeromedical evacuation crews and 15 critical care air transport teams. 908th AES's Capt. Jamey Durham, a health services administrator, said since

Sept. 2 they've been controlling about a "one channel mission a day, typically consisting of a run to New Orleans, Naval Air Station Bell Chase, Gulfport and Meridian, Miss., Shreveport and back home to San Antonio (Kelly Field).

The process was chaotic at first, but 908th and 452nd AE Squadrons were able "to put together a smooth operation" that is now running flawlessly.

Captain Durham spoke glowingly about the support they received from 433rd AES commander Col. Stephen Foster, who has overall responsibility for the aeromedical evacuation operations.

Continued on page 5

No lull in fast pace, wing continues to set standard

Homecoming.... something that we may associate with high school football games, but for the 908th it meant the arrival of the last



Col. Heath J. Nuckolls
908th Airlift Wing commander

of our aircrews, maintenance personnel, and aircraft returning from the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. The event went very well and was attended by numerous dignitaries including the Air Force Reserve Command vice commander, 22nd Air Force commander, the mayors of Montgomery and Selma, the American Legion national commander, and many local civic leaders. I would like to express my gratitude to Maj. Jerry Lobb for organizing the event, Col. Kerry Kohler and the maintenance personnel for the setup in the Fuel Cell, Maj. Stan Jesionowski and Capt. Shane Toomay for the slide presentation, and

Command Chief Master Amos Moore for arranging the refreshments from the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

After nearly two years of out-processing, deploying, redeploying, and in-processing, where do we go from here? We continue to train and be prepared to meet any future requirements. We have already demonstrated the ability to be ready at a moment's notice. Within days of Hurricane Katrina hitting the Gulf Coast, the unit launched an aircraft and medical evacuation crews to assist in evacuation and relief efforts. Aerial Port personnel drove down and back in one night delivering needed

generators to Keesler AFB. Security Forces personnel have deployed to Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans to provide base and convoy security. Personnel from across the wing continue to fill air expeditionary force commitments.

The pace has been fast and furious for the past two years with mobilization, AEF, and inspections. You have met each challenge in an outstanding manner and I know that you will continue to do the same in the future. The pace continues to be fast with hurricane relief, demobilization, inspections, staff assistance visits, and AEF but I know this wing is ready---always.

Family Day 2006 shaping up to be special

By Master Sgt. Ken Wright
908ASTS First Sergeant

There will be a 908th Airlift Wing Family Day in 2006 just as there has been in years past. A dedicated team formed last June is already well engaged in planning for it.

The 2006 Family Day will be the first time in the past couple of years that a large number of our 908th

members won't be deployed and unable to be with us.

So the commanders want to make this Family Day a special one. The early start in the planning process provides the opportunity to work through bigger ideas than could be done in previous years.

Colonel Nuckolls has supplemented the team of family day representatives

from each squadron with the dynamic support of Colonel Forshey. The team is excited and benefiting from the support of members throughout the wing - both past and present.

As indicated by the polling done to determine whether to have the event at the Montgomery Zoo or at Maxwell AFB, and whether on Saturday or on Sunday, one primary goal is to give our 908 AW family an appreciation day that is tailored to their suggestions

as much as can be feasibly done. And yes, making the event cost free for our members and their families is still the other primary goal. More details will be forthcoming over the next few months. In the meantime, be sure to give your unit's family day representative your ideas for making this an extraordinary event. Ask your family to plan to join you during the May 06 UTA for a day of fun, fellowship, and most importantly our wing's collective "Thanks".

Keep giving, keep praying

One of the things that I never get tired of seeing is the amount of help and support we give each other in times of need.



By Chaplain (Capt.)
Jamie Danford
908th AW chaplain

Several weeks ago Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast leaving devastation in its path. Almost immediately everyone started looking to see what could be done.

The outpouring has been amazing - and that just reflects the dollar amounts visibly pledged. There is no way to count the amounts of homes that have been opened up, meals that have been bought, and other help that has been given to the folks displaced by Katrina.

I would ask us not to stop in our charity. Needs will continue to surface; I hope we find ways to meet those needs.

You may want to take this time to look around - see how you can help. You may not be able to go to the Gulf Coast - but there might be evacuees in your neighborhood that you could adopt. You may give a donation of either money or clothes. Look around I am sure you can see a need.

And in all do not forget to pray. Pray for the safety of the people working and pray for those who have lost so much and will begin to rebuild.

Climate Survey launches Oct. 1

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) -- Airmen have the power to shape the future when the 2005 Air Force Climate Survey launches Oct. 1.

"The direction we take depends on you!" said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Gerald Murray. "The motto of the 2005 Climate Survey, 'Speak Today, Shape Tomorrow,' accurately reflects the impact this survey has on our Air Force. It's your chance to provide honest and straightforward answers to issues that directly affect you and your fellow Airmen. Your identity is protected and every response is reviewed for consideration."

The survey, offered every two years since 1997, measures how people feel about leadership, supervision, training, recognition and other aspects of the Air Force. This year's survey also measures enduring competencies such as effective communication, teamwork, judgment and adaptation under pressure.

The survey provides a total force perspective and includes active-duty members, civilians, the Air Force Reserve Command and Air National Guard.

The survey runs through Nov. 23 and can be completed online anytime during the survey period from either a government or personal computer. The survey can be found at <https://afclimatesurvey.af.mil/>. (Courtesy of Air Force Manpower Agency Public Affairs)



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This funded Air Force Reserve Command newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of the "Southern Flyer" are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

Editorial policy

Editorial content of the "Southern Flyer" is edited, prepared and provided by the 908th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office.

All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated.

We solicit articles, drawings and photographs and reserve the right to edit materials to conform to "Southern Flyer" editorial policies.

Because of the printing and mail-out schedule the newspaper goes to press on Friday, two weeks prior to the UTA. The submission deadline for articles or information is the Wednesday two weeks prior to the UTA.

For information about this schedule, call Jeff Melvin at (334) 953-7874.



Above, two 908AW C-130s bearing returning unit members make a pass before landing on the Maxwell AFB flightline. Right, Maj. Gary

Gomez and Staff Sgt. Valarie McLellan wave the American flag in celebration of the 908th Airlift Wing's return home. Photo by Melanie Rodgers

Ceremony marks return of last 908th AW C-130, aircrews, maintenance personnel from Southwest Asia



Reserve Command Vice Commander Maj. Gen. David Tanzi, 22nd AF Commander Maj. Gen. James Bankers and 908AW Commander Col. Heath J. Nuckolls greet returning unit members.



908th Maintenance Squadron's Staff Sgt. Demetrius King, poses for picture with spouse and son upon his return to Maxwell AFB Sept. 9.



C-130 pilot Maj. Doran Gillie gets a warm reception from his family

Photos by Jeff Melvin

Civil engineers sharpen skills with N.Car. Guard

By Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder
908th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Wing civil engineers used the second August UTA to train at Albemarle, N.C., an hour north of Charlotte.

The CE troops loaded up on a C-130 at Maxwell AFB and deployed to Stanley Field Municipal Airport in Stanley County, N.C., for a weekend chock full of hands-on training in areas as varied as utility pole climbing and rapid runway repair.

The host unit was the 145th North Carolina Air National Guard. The CE contingent, led by Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Watkins, also trained on water purification, Electrical Airfield Lighting System and heavy equipment operation.

Triple R, or Rapid Runway Repair, Sergeant Watkins explained, is part of base recovery and provided "a great opportunity for the CE members to get their hands on the equipment."

"This is an excellent opportunity to get some training that we can't get at Maxwell," Senior Master Sergeant Watkins said. "It gives us practical experience on equipment to enhance our wartime skills."

The CE troops also practiced rapid runway repair using huge fiberglass mattes, two-section panels with each panel measuring 30 feet by 54 feet.

The fiberglass mattes are used for patching runways, Master Sgt. Darrel Waters said. "We place a series of panels together and then place them over the bomb crater. The fiberglass mattes are then anchored around the crater in the runway as a temporary fix.

"We have two hours to put

the matte together to repair the runway," Sergeant Waters said.

"It's very important for everyone to know their jobs. The matte chief is in charge of the matte on a well trained

matte team," said Tech. Sgt. Dennis Ellis. "If aircraft in the air need to land in a certain amount of time or if a pilot has a small amount of fuel left, then we need to fix the runway in a hurry," ex-Navy Sea-Bee Sergeant Ellis, 908CES matte chief, continued.

Sergeant Waters said he tells his people, "Pretend your family is in a plane circling the runway and wanting to land and if you don't want your family injured, we have to get the matte down." This scenario encourages their sense of urgency, he said.

Meanwhile, a Reverse Osmosis Processing Unit is set up and a series of fire hoses are run to a putrid pool of sewer-like water at the bottom of a small hill. The still pool



Above, Tech. Sgt. John Vaughn shows off his skills as an excavator operator.

of muddy water swarms with mosquitoes. Pumping the water uphill means that two hydraulic pumps have to be deployed to increase the flow to the ROPU. Once the water arrives to the unit, it is filtered and purified into drinkable water as good as or better than water out of a faucet at home.

"We can take creek water and make it into drinking water," said Master Sergeant Herbert Pfeiffer who was being assisted by Senior Master Sgt. Stan Walker, Utility Superintendent, 145th CE.

Sergeant Pfeiffer added, "This unit can take any kind of water including salt water and produce clean drinking water."

The ROPU, which costs more \$1 million, churns out 12 gallons of drinking water for every 40 gallons of putrid water processed.

The ROPU runs as a 24-hour operation and produces 600 gallons of fresh water per hour, depending on the turbidity.

"Once it's up and running, it takes only one person to operate," said Master Sgt. Pfeiffer, who has been in utilities since the mid-90s.

The processed water contains less chemicals and less contaminants than bottled water, he added.

At another section of the small compound, CE troops

get the chance to show off or sharpen their pole-climbing skills. A group of young airmen hover in a semi circle as Master Sgt. William James, 908th CE electrical systems supervisor, explains the donning of the climbing equipment.

"We're required to recertify every year plus it shows our mobility on the poles," said the sergeant. There's a real world requirement to climb as well."

"We usually use bucket trucks, but not every base has the equipment, so we need to retain efficiency in climbing poles," Sergeant James said.

He then led the group over to the short runway used for training. The Electrical Airfield Lighting System or EALS was being laid out along the edges of the runway. "We go to remote locations and drop lights and make a functional airfield," the sergeant explained. "We make sure the green lights are coming and the red lights are going out; then the crew fires the system up and tests it to ensure the EALS works."

Crater profiling is another task that CE trains in while at the site.

"Crater profiling is checking for upheaval," said Senior Master Sgt. Tim Merrihew, engineering assistant superintendent. "It (crater profiling) ensures a nice, even runway for planes to take off and land."

"We give direction to equipment operators if the grading is high or low (flush with other pavement)," said SMSgt. Merrihew referring to the crater repair.

The group loaded up on the C-130 Sunday afternoon of the UTA to return home to Maxwell having had a full weekend of hands-on skills enhancement.

Along with the quality training, the N.C. trip offers another key benefit, affordability. "The North Carolina Air Guard doesn't charge us a penny for this and we're fortunate to be able to train like this. It gives us fantastic wartime training for every CE troop," said Senior Master Sergeant Watkins.



Loadmaster Chief Master Sgt. Mike Harpe and crew members carry an elderly patient onto an aircraft.



Senior Airman Terrance Merriweather and Airman 1st Class Jamal A. Washington scale poles after receiving refresher climbing tips.

25th APS's flight superintendent Senior Master Sgt. Antone Jackson checks the bindings on a stretcher bound for Keesler AFB, Miss.



Photo by Maj. Jerry Lobb

er (left), and Tech. Sgt. Daniel Barrera, 42nd Aeromedical-Dental Operations Air Force Reserve Command C-130 at Maxwell AFB, Ala., Aug. 31.

: 908th to the rescue

Con't from page 1

Like all of the wing members participating in the relief effort, the opportunity to help out is what prompted 14 wing security forces people to answer the call. Given a heads up on Saturday, Sept. 3, receiving the final OK on Monday, Tuesday morning (Sept. 7) the squad, led by Senior Master Sgt. Curtis Coleman, out processed, drew their weapons from the armory and boarded a unit C-130 bound for News Orleans. The Maxwell group will augment forces protecting Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans.

The security forces contingent is a mixture of veterans who've seen their share of action since 9-11 and newcomers like Airman 1st Class D'Andre Pratt, a college sophomore, going on his first deployment.

He's "trained and ready," the Airman said, and although not certain about the conditions they'll find, confident that they can make a differ-

ence.

Aerial Port personnel continue to set the pace for the wing in terms of improvised support. After initial indications that they might be needed, the aerial porters are no longer on standby; however, they continue to support the relief effort in inventive ways. Already earning praise for acquiring trucks and delivering generators to Keesler Air Force Base, Miss, overnight when the bulky generators proved too large for transportation by aircraft, the aerial porters made another 'special' delivery Sept. 3.

Responding to a request for help from Maxwell AFB's host unit, the 42nd Air Base Wing, seven volunteers assembled a convoy of two 1.5-ton pick ups and two regular pick ups and drove down to Keesler AFB to pick up and bring back to Maxwell 40 displaced pets.

"We went down around 3 p.m. and returned around midnight," said 25th APS

superintendent Chief Master Sgt. George Edwards. The aerial porters were accompanied by one veterinarian, making for a "most unusual trip." Most of the pets have been received into homes within the Maxwell AFB community pending reunification with their owners.

As recently as Sept. 14, aerial port volunteers were at it again, this time packing, loading and transporting to Keesler AFB-area evacuees nearly 17,500 pounds of much needed supplies collected by base agencies such as the First Sergeants Group, the Chaplains' Group, etc.

As of mid-September, more than 21,442 active duty members and 45,791 Army and Air National Guard members were supporting the disaster relief efforts in the U.S. Gulf Coast, delivering more than 50 million liters of water, 164 million pounds of ice and 22 million Meals Ready to Eat to areas in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Air Force Reservists mobilize for Katrina relief efforts

By Capt. Steve Alvarez, USA
American Forces Press Service

MAXWELL AFB, Ala., Sept. 6, 2005 – Some airmen of the 908th Airlift Wing are returning to their home base today after participating in an overseas deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The troops aren't even back yet, but their commander says they're ready to serve again, only this time, in disaster-relief operations.

"A lot of folks have been chomping at the bit to help," Air Force Lt. Col. John Stokes said. He said that his crews sent him e-mails that said, "As soon as we get back, we're ready to turn around and do hurricane-support missions."

The 908th, an Air Force Reserve wing assigned to Air Force Reserve Command, has been a busy unit in the past few years. The 1,260-person unit flies eight of the Air Force's C-130H Hercules.

They were put into action most recently soon after Hurricane Katrina left the Gulf Coast in ruins Aug. 29.

"They call us up and ask us to do things, and we just do it," wing spokesman Maj. Jerry Lobb said. "We get a phone call, and four hours later we're gone."

The wing was tasked by

U.S. Northern Command, the lead command element for military disaster-relief operations, to fly airlift missions around the disaster area. The wing provided aircraft, aircrews and aeromedical personnel. About 60 personnel from the wing have been called up to support hurricane-relief missions, including security forces and aerial port squadron personnel.

The 357th Airlift Squadron, commanded by Stokes, is just one of many squadrons from the 908th supporting Katrina efforts. The 908th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron is another one supporting disaster recovery, with 10 medical personnel and six in a crew-management cell.

"Our personnel are mostly serving in Louisiana and the coast," Air Force Lt. Col. Ronnie Roberts said. "They have been flying civilian personnel evacuation."

Roberts, a nurse when he's not in uniform as commander of the 908th AES, said most airmen in his squadron provide health care aboard aircraft.

"The needs are unbelievable," Roberts said of the disaster conditions. "I'm very proud of our crews. They've stepped right up."

Airmen from these units

have evacuated about 60 military-affiliated evacuees from the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Gulfport, Miss., to here and later on to Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

Many of the elderly passengers had been awake for more than three days and were extremely frail, Lobb said. "Most of these folks weren't mobile, and they were in their upper 80s," C-130 pilot Maj. Steve Catchings said. "It took two to three hours just to get them off the buses."

Catchings said that while some were suffering from mental and physical exhaustion, one man asked a pilot if they were flying in a C-130. When the pilot answered that it was a C-130, the man said, "I've jumped out of those before."

A common thread among military responders to Katrina's aftermath is a knack for improvisation. The magnitude of the situation has required an extraordinary amount of flexibility from service personnel.

The airmen of the 908th AW have also improvised in their Katrina missions. Members of the 25th Aerial Port Squadron were tasked to load generators bound for Keesler Air Force Base, Miss.,

which sustained a direct hit by Katrina.

The configuration of the generators made them too large for transportation by aircraft. Undeterred, the airmen allocated trucks and drove the generators to Keesler so Air Force personnel there could have power.

Crews have been flying steadily for the past week, flying a truck and 10 disaster-relief responders to Mississippi from Wyoming, evacuating the elderly from the Gulfport military retirement home to Maryland, transporting 10 chaplains from Georgia to the disaster zone, and flying aeromedical "shuttle" flights around the disaster area out of San Antonio, where most of the medical-evacuation activities are being staged.

Before the hurricane made landfall, the 357th was ready. "If any taskings came down, we had two crews ready to go," Catchings said.

But the unit's busy schedule isn't only reserved for Katrina. Roberts said that all of his flying-status personnel have deployed overseas in support of the global war on terror, many of them several times.

"We know the combat side

of this," Roberts said. "When they pulled us in, everyone went out and did what they were trained to do," he said. But, Roberts admits, his crews have seen things in the last week they ordinarily don't experience on military medical flights, including an attack when a dog bit a nurse while she provided care to a patient.

"We're professionals," Roberts said. "We're out here, in natural disasters and combat."

Stokes said he has more volunteers than he does tasks. And he is personally planning to provide relief through an organized effort at his church.

"Something you see particularly in the Guard and Reserve is that they should have a chapter of 'overachievers anonymous,'" Lobb said. "They're very active across the gamut of what they do for the Guard, Reserve and their communities. You wonder when they have time to do the normal things in life."

Catchings summed up the squadron's current emotional state. "We wish we could do more," he said. "It's a huge logistical undertaking. We just let them know we're here and we're ready."

Demobilization processing (stuff you need to know!)

By Maj. Troy N. Vonada
908th Military Personnel Flight Commander

To all activated Reservists—please pay particular attention to this article as there is some very important information you'll need to know to get yourself demobilized. To prepare for your demobilization, I have captured some key items that are sure to help you transition from active duty back to non-active duty, former jobs and way of life. My staff and I stand ready to assist in any way possible and plan to make your transition as smooth as we can.

First of all, there are four planned sessions for demobilization processing. A typical session is a weeklong and will consist of briefings on Monday and MPF demobilization processing on Friday. The first week, specifically designed for Air Reserve Technicians (ARTs) and those who plan to use approximately 60 days of unused (terminal) leave before final deactivation, took place Sept. 12-16.

The second week is set for Oct. 3-7. This will be the first of two possible weeks of processing for the Operations Group personnel. The third week, Oct. 11-14, targets Maintenance Group members. And, finally, the fourth week, Oct. 17-21, will serve as the final week of processing for Operations Group.

For Operations personnel: Commander's Calls will take place from 8 to 9 a.m. Monday, Oct. 3 and

Ops guys create web site

Two operations people, Maj. Bill Hughes and Scott Hayes, want to make the demobilization process easier for their fellow wing members. The Airmen created a web site, <http://webpages.charter.net/billhughes/Home.html/>, containing a myriad of useful documents and links. Although much of the information contained on the site is available from other sources, Majors Hayes and Hughes created what they hope to be a one-stop site. Check it out.

17. Demobilization briefings will be held from 9 a.m. until noon, Sept. 12, and Oct. 3, 11 and 17. Both Operations Commander's Calls and morning briefing sessions will take place in the AIS Large Auditorium.

The Chaplain's office, Wing Training, Family Support, Reserve Pay, Judge Advocate General, TRICARE and Veteran's Affairs will present briefings.

In the afternoon, from 1-4 p.m. in the AIS Small Auditorium, there will be a panel session of experts from each function who briefed during the morning session. We urge wing members and their families to attend the afternoon panel session to get their questions answered as the morning briefings are tailored for briefing only with minimal time for question and answer periods.

Between Monday and Friday (or Tuesday to Friday) of each week, planned training events will be held at the squadron level. During this time, members will participate in ground and ancillary training and be scheduled for various appointments.

On Fridays, all members are to participate in MPF demobilization processing. The MPF will get with the various squadrons to prepare a schedule so that processing is orderly. As a reminder, final out-processing will take place at the end of the two-year mobilization period, which is on or about Nov. 24. Group and Squadron Commanders are working with all members to schedule them for final out-processing.

Upon demobilization, members receive a Transitional Assistance Medical Program card which entitles them to TRICARE standard insurance for 180 days from issuance. Please note that when you get the TAMP card, you and your family will convert from TRICARE Prime to TRICARE Standard. We recommend that you wait as late as possible to get your TAMP card as the 180 day time clock starts the day the card is issued.

The MPF will start issuing TAMP cards Nov. 21 and will be open Nov. 25 as well. Also, if you wait to get your card after the demobilization effective date, your 180-day period starts the

day after your demobilization date, so benefits will only be available up to 180 days beyond demobilization effective date.

As far as identification cards go, if you have a current Reserve ID card it will be given to you at demobilization processing with swap-out of your active duty ID card. While processing through the MPF, Customer Service will determine if you need a new ID card and if that is the case, you'll be issued a new one. You may have to go to the 42d ABW to get your card as the actual making of ID Cards is a time consuming process, so please be patient as you are out-processed.

When considering your DD Form 214, remember you'll need to complete the DD Form 214 checklist as quickly as possible and turn the checklist in to MPF Relocations. You can find the checklist at the Q drive, under MPF, then Relocations, and DD 214. Please get yourself a copy of the checklist and start compiling the documentation and information now as it will serve to expedite completion of your DD Form 214.

In closing, let me say that we're all very proud of each and every one of our warfighters. You've answered the call and performed in a very professional manner in some tough circumstances. We, along with your families, have missed you and are glad you're back with us. Needless to say, you have re-written the history books and can certainly be proud of your accomplishments.

Transportation flight reservists to receive Army medal

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

MAXWELL AFB, Ala. — "Join the Air Force, Serve with the Army" may be a new twist to an old recruiting slogan.

In fact, five Airmen with the 908th Airlift Wing based here, did such a good job that the Army is recognizing their contribution to America's senior service during their year in Iraq. In December, they will receive the Army Commendation Medal.

"The wing was tasked to provide vehicle operators to serve in Iraq," said Master Sgt. George Campbell. "We volunteered."

Master Sgt. Vera Berry, Staff Sgt. John Traum, Tech. Sgt. Steven Smith and Tech. Sgt. Cynthia Blais joined Sergeant Campbell as they served with their sister service in Balad. In early 2004, the Army needed transportation units to supply the Army and Marine forces in Iraq. Air Force and Navy personnel volunteered to help their ground-pounder colleagues.

The five Airmen were part of a 250-man company the Air Force put together. The reservists went through Army training before deploying out of Fort Benning, Ga., in February 2004.

"The training was excellent," Sergeant Traum said during a recent interview. "We don't normally have to

think tactically, and the training gave us what we needed."

The Airmen drove 5-ton and larger trucks in-country and also had some administrative jobs in Balad, which had the unfortunate moniker of "Mortarville" back then. When the Airmen were there, Sergeant Smith said the base received some 390 rounds when insurgents would lob mortars into the base whenever they could sneak in close enough.

The reservists also had to contend with roadside and homemade bombs, and the different ways insurgents planted them.

"I'll tell you we learned a lot while we were there," Sergeant Campbell said. "And one of the things we learned was respect for the Soldiers and the way they did their missions."

The Air Force company was attached to the Army's 7th Transportation Battalion. Sergeant Smith, who was in the Army as a driver during Operation Desert Storm, said the Army NCOs took the younger drivers under their wings and continued their training even as they performed operations.

"They do a better job of that than we do," Sergeant Smith said. They also learned the differences between the services.

"The Army supply system is such that the Soldiers have to scrounge

more," Sergeant Traum said.

Sergeant Blais agreed. "We had to learn the way they did things and adopt as we could. But we really did have a very good relationship with the Soldiers."

The Air Force unit had a mixture of active-duty, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve personnel.

"The reservists were able to use

their civilian occupations while we were deployed," Sergeant Campbell said. "We had people from all walks of life that were able to make things better."

All agreed the experience taught them a lot, and the rough duty hasn't scared them off. All five Airmen have recently re-enlisted. (AFRC News Service



Photo by Jeff Melvin

From lefts, Sergeants Smith, Campbell, Blais, Berry and Traum before deploying in February 2004.

Take Note



Photos by Jeff Melvin

AES, MXS get new commanders

Lt. Col. Ronnie J. Roberts, above, and Maj. Alfred "Fred" Proulx, right, took command of the 908th Aeromedical Evacuation and Maintenance Squadrons, respectively. Colonel Roberts, who comes to the 908th from Pittsburgh Air Reserve Station where he held numerous leadership positions, including chief nurse, flight nurse, flight nurse instructor and examiner. He replaces Col.

Nina Green-Perez. Major Proulx comes to the 908th from Robins AFB, Ga., where he is a program manager on the C-130J. He spent 12 years on active duty prior to his departure in February 1988. He replaces Lt. Col. Constance von Hoffman, who now serves as maintenance group deputy commander.

Trio receive quarterly honors

908th Comm Flight's Master Sgt. Greg Black, far right, 908th Command Post's Senior Airman Charles Jackson, bottom left, and 908ASTS's Staff Sgt. Sherri Senn are the wing's Senior NCO, Airman and NCO of the Quarterly respectively. Sergeant Black, a computer system operator, also serves as the wing's webmaster. Airman Jackson is a command post controller and Sergeant Senn is a aeromedical services specialist.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Jay Ponder

Congratulations to the following people:

Promotions

....to Senior Master Sgt.
Leon E. Alexander, MXG

....to Senior Airman
Jeremy W. Flowers, SFS

Retirements

Maj. David E. Lang, 908AW
Master Sgt. Leonard Caldwell, MXS
Tech. Sgt. John A. Barfoot, CES

Fraud, Waste & Abuse Hotline contact information

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SAF -- Phone: toll free (800) 538-8429; Mail: SAF/IGQ, 1140 AF Pentagon, Washington, DC 20030-1140; E-mail: safiq@pentagon.af.mil
DoD -- Phone: toll free (800) 424-9098; Mail: Defense Hotline, The Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-1900; E-mail: hotline@dodig.osd.mil
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